

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Prior to the present communication, claims 1-29 were pending in the subject application. Claims 1-13, 15-25 and 27-29 have been amended herein and claims 14 and 26 have been cancelled. As such, claims 1-13, 15-25 and 27-29 remain pending. This Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

#### **Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for prioritizing user application preferences based on user input data, the method comprising:

recognizing user input data relevant to ~~[[an]]~~a first application as a user choice setting associated with the first application, wherein the user choice setting determines at least one property of execution of at least one event of the first application;

~~storing the user choice setting as a protected value;~~

securing the user choice setting as a protected value using an access control indicator, wherein the access control indicator prohibits the second application ~~applications~~ from modifying the user choice setting associated with the first application without authorization from a user;

receiving a request from the second application to modify the user choice setting associated with the first application;

in response to receiving ~~[[a]]~~the request from the second application to modify the user choice setting associated with the first application, generating an approval user interface requesting authorization ~~of the modification~~ from the user

to modify the user choice setting associated with the first application to be consistent with the modification request received from the second application;

receiving input from the user approving the modification of the user choice setting associated with the first application to be consistent with the modification request received from the second application ~~to determine a desired user choice setting associated with the application;~~

modifying the access control indicator to permit modification of the user choice setting associated with the first application to be consistent with the modification request received from the second application ~~in accordance with the desired user choice setting;~~

modifying the user choice setting in accordance with the received user input; and

restoring the access control indicator to prohibit further modification by the second application of applications from modifying the user choice setting associated with the first application,

wherein each step is executed on a computing device of the user.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1,

wherein the computing device of the user has an operating system with a registry, [[and]]

wherein the protected value is a registry key stored in the registry, [[and]]

wherein the access control indicator is an access control list (ACL) that has been initialized to prevent writing to the protected value,

and wherein modifying the access control indicator includes modifying  
~~requires a user to modify~~ the access control indicator to permit writing to the  
protected value.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 2, wherein the operating  
system also ~~[[has]]~~includes a security subsystem, and wherein modifying the access control  
indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user rights to modify  
the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 3, wherein modifying the  
access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user  
ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures, and wherein ownership of the registry key  
automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security  
subsystem of the operating system.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 4, wherein providing to the  
user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures ~~modifying the access control indicator to~~  
~~permit writing to the protected value~~ includes ~~allowing the user to~~ temporarily providing to the  
user ~~take~~ ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 3,  
wherein securing the user choice setting as a protected value using the  
access control indicator includes securing the user choice setting as a protected  
value using ~~restoring~~ the access control indicator to prohibit the second  
application from ~~modifying the user choice setting associated with the application~~

~~includes requiring a user to modify the access control indicator to permit~~ writing to the protected value,

and wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit modification of the user choice setting associated with the first application to be consistent with the modification request received from the second application includes modifying the access control indicator to permit the second application to write to the protected value.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[6]]~~4, wherein ~~requiring a user to modify~~ restoring the access control indicator to ~~permit writing to the protected value~~ prohibit further modification by the second application includes returning ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures to the operating system ~~when the access control indicator is unmodified by the user.~~

8. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

~~generating a user choice setting user interface;~~

displaying, in association with the approval user interface, the current user choice setting ~~on the user interface~~ along with ~~other~~ options for modifying the user choice setting<sub>1</sub>[[;]]

and wherein receiving input from the user approving the modification of the user choice setting comprises receiving input from the user in accordance with at least one of the displayed options

~~receiving the authorizing input from the user interface, along with a further input indicating a modified user choice setting including at least one of the other displayed options for the user choice setting.~~

9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising generating a change notification ~~to the user~~ when the user choice setting has been modified, the change notification identifying the second application ~~that modified the user setting~~ and the ~~contents of the protected value~~ user choice setting before and after the modification.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the user choice ~~settings include~~ setting includes at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MIME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 10, wherein the user choice setting includes the registered client setting, and wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, ~~e-mail~~, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.

12. (Currently Amended) A system for storing user choice settings in a data repository to prevent undesired modifications to the user choice settings, the system comprising:

a registry for storing a user choice setting associated with a first application as a protected value in a registry key, wherein the user choice setting determines at least one property of execution of at least one event of the first

application, and wherein the user choice setting comprises at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client, a protocol handler, a MIME type handler, a task association, an internet explorer home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting;

an access control list (ACL) to secure the registry key, wherein the ACL prevents the first application or another application from modifying the user choice setting associated with the first application; and

an approval user interface to control modifications to the user choice setting, wherein the ~~interface generates an~~ approval user interface is generated on a computing device of the user in response to receiving a request from the first application or another application to modify the user choice setting.

13. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 12,

wherein the approval user interface, upon obtaining approval to modify the user choice setting, modifies the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key,

wherein the approval user interface writes to the protected value the modified user choice setting,

wherein the approval user interface restores the ACL to prevent writing to the protected value in the registry key after writing the modified user choice setting,

and wherein the approval user interface ~~further notifying~~ notifies the user whenever the approval user interface writes to the protected value, including

notifying the user of a content of the protected value before and after the approval user interface writes to the protected value and ~~further notifying the user which an identity of the application that~~ requested the modification.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim ~~[[14]]~~13, wherein the user choice setting comprises a registered client setting, and wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 12, wherein the computing device of the user includes an operating system having a security subsystem, and wherein the security subsystem modifies ~~and wherein modifying~~ the ACL to ~~prohibit~~ permit the first application or another application ~~from modifying~~ to modify the user choice setting associated with the first application upon receiving user approval of the request to modify the user choice setting ~~includes providing to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.~~

17. (Currently Amended) The system, of Claim 12, wherein the security subsystem modifies ~~modifying~~ the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key ~~includes~~ by providing to the user ownership of the registry key, wherein ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL~~[[,]]~~ in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 12, wherein the security subsystem modifies ~~modifying~~ the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key includes by providing to the user temporary ownership of the registry key, wherein temporary ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to ~~allowing the user to temporarily modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system~~ take ownership of the registry key.

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-accessible medium having components for performing a method of safely modifying user application preferences for when and how an application is to operate on a computer of a user, the ~~instructions~~ method comprising:

~~recognize~~ recognizing user input data relevant to ~~[[an]]~~ the application as a user choice setting, wherein the user choice setting determines at least one property of execution of at least one event of the application;

~~store the user choice setting as a protected value;~~

~~secure~~ securing the user choice setting as a protected value using an access control indicator, wherein the access control indicator prohibits the application from modifying the user choice setting;

~~receive~~ receiving a request from the application to modify the user choice setting;

in response to ~~[[a]]~~ the request from the application to modify the user choice setting, ~~generate~~ generating an approval user interface requesting authorization ~~of the modification~~ from the user to modify the user choice setting in accordance with the modification request received;



~~receive~~receiving input from the user approving modification of the user choice setting associated with the application to be consistent with the request received from the application to determine a desired user choice setting;

modifying the access control indicator to permit modification of the user choice setting associated with the application to be consistent with the modification request received;

~~modify~~ modifying the user choice setting in accordance with the ~~desired received~~ user choice setting input; [[and]]

~~restore~~ restoring the access control indicator to prohibit further modification of the user from modifying the user choice setting[[.]]; and

generating a change notification to the user once the user choice setting has been modified

~~wherein each step is executed on a computing device of the user.~~

20. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, wherein the ~~computing device~~ computer of the user includes an operating system having a registry, [[and]]

wherein the protected value is a registry key stored in the registry, [[and]]

wherein the access control indicator is ~~the instruction to modify the user choice setting in accordance with the desired user choice setting includes an instruction to modify~~ an access control list (ACL) that has been initialized to prevent writing to the protected value,

and wherein modifying the access control indicator includes modifying  
~~require a user to modify~~ the access control indicator to permit writing to the  
protected value.

21. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20,  
wherein the operating system also ~~[[has]]~~includes a security subsystem, and wherein ~~the~~  
~~instruction to modify~~ modifying the ACL access control indicator to permit writing to the  
protected value includes ~~an instruction to provide~~ providing to the user rights to modify the ACL  
in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

22. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim  
~~[[20]]~~21, wherein ~~the instruction to modify the ACL~~ modifying the access control indicator to  
permit writing to the protected value includes ~~an instruction to provide~~ providing to the user  
ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures, and wherein ownership of the registry key  
automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security  
subsystem of the operating system.

23. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20,  
wherein ~~the instruction to modify the ACL to permit writing to the protected value~~ providing to  
the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures includes ~~an instruction to allow the~~  
~~user to temporarily take~~ providing to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures.

24. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium ~~[[or]]~~of Claim  
~~[[20]]~~21,

wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit modification of the user choice setting associated with the application to be consistent with the modification request received includes requiring the instruction to lock the ACL to prevent writing to the protected value includes an instruction to require a user to modify the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

25. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 24, wherein restoring the access control indicator to prohibit further modification of the user choice setting the instruction to require a user to modify the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes an instruction to return returning ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures to the operating system.

26. (Canceled).

27. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, ~~further comprising instructions to generate a change notification to the user whenever the user choice setting has been modified,~~ wherein the change notification identifying identifies the application ~~that modified the user setting~~ and the contents of the user choice setting protected value before and after the modification.

28. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, wherein the user choice ~~settings include~~ setting includes at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

29. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 28, wherein the user choice setting includes the registered client setting, and wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, ~~e-mail~~, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.